

LABOUR

‘We want a jobs-first Brexit to take our wealth back’

By Arj Singh

Labour will deliver a “jobs-first Brexit” and help the British people “take their wealth back” from rich and powerful vested interests if it wins the general election, the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn will say.

At the official launch of his party’s campaign in Manchester today, Mr Corbyn will insist that “when Labour wins, the British people win”.

He has so far tried to steer the campaign narrative away from Theresa May’s focus on the forthcoming Brexit talks, instead focusing on Tory cuts to public services and his party’s spending plans.

But today he will accuse the Tories of putting party interests above the “real national interest”, following the Prime Minister’s allegations that Brussels leaked damaging details of a meeting she had with the European Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker, to try to influence the election.

And in an apparent attempt to win over pro-EU Labour voters who are considering switching to the anti-hard Brexit Liberal Democrats, Mr

Hospital parking pledge

Jeremy Corbyn has promised **free car parking at all NHS hospitals in England** if Labour wins the election, saying that parking fees are “a tax on serious illness”.

The Labour leader pledged to cover the lost revenue with an 8 per cent rise in insurance premium tax to 20 per cent for private health insurance products. The tax rise will be enough to cover the £162m that English hospitals raise annually from car parking charges, which place an unfair and unnecessary burden on families, patients and NHS staff.

Announcing the plan while visiting nursing students in Tory-held Worcester, Mr Corbyn said: “Labour will end hospital parking charges, which place an unfair and unnecessary burden on families, patients and NHS staff. “Hospital parking charges are a tax on serious illnesses.”

£162m

The amount that hospitals in England raise each year from car parking charges

Corbyn will say: “This election isn’t about Brexit itself. That issue has been settled. The question now is what sort of Brexit do we want – and what sort of country do we want Britain to be after Brexit?”

“Labour wants a jobs-first Brexit, a Brexit that safeguards the future of Britain’s vital industries, a Brexit that paves the way to a genuinely fairer society and an upgraded economy.”

After campaigning in Tory-held key marginals in the West Midlands yesterday, Mr Corbyn will return to the stronghold that voted in Labour’s Andy Burnham as Greater Manchester metro mayor last week in one of the few pieces of good news in dismal local election results, which pointed to a landslide for Mrs May on 8 June.

Launching a blistering attack on what he sees as vested interests, Mr Corbyn will press home his key message that Labour offers “a real alternative to the rigged system holding us back”.



Jeremy Corbyn speaks at Worcester Guildhall yesterday
GETTY IMAGES

CONSUMER

May promises to curb standard energy tariffs

By Padraic Flanagan

Theresa May pledged to end the scandal of “rip-off” gas and electricity bills by bringing in an energy price cap following a Tory general election victory.

Under the plan, the market regulator Ofgem would impose a price ceiling for customers on poor-value standard variable tariffs, which are paid by 17 million customers. The policy is expected to save families about £100 a year.

The promise echoes a Labour manifesto pledge in 2015 to cap utility prices, which was rubbished by the former Tory leader, David Cameron, as evidence that Labour’s then leader, Ed Miliband, wanted to live in a “Marxist universe”.

Mrs May’s voter-friendly announcement was swiftly criticised by the British Gas owner Centrica, whose chief executive, Iain Conn, said there were “some at the heart of the government who just don’t believe in free markets”. The firm added: “Centrica does not believe in any form of price regulation. Evidence from other countries would suggest this will lead to reduced competition and choice, and potentially higher average prices.”

But the Conservatives countered that Mrs May’s pledge was aimed at helping the seven in 10 households on poor-value tariffs which had seen prices rise by more than 150 per cent over the past 15 years.

Five of the “Big Six” energy firms have recently raised the costs of their standard tariffs – even after an investigation found that families were paying £1.4bn more a year than they needed to. Greg Clark,



Theresa May said a cap would be put on energy suppliers’ standard variable tariffs, which are paid by 17 million customers
AFP/GETTY IMAGES

‘First couple’ hit the sofa

Philip May will give his first TV interview today, as he steps up his campaigning in support of his wife, Theresa May.

Mr May (inset) will appear on the BBC’s *The One Show* alongside the Prime Minister, in what will be the first time the pair will have been interviewed together live on air.

The 59-year-old is a successful businessman who has enjoyed a 40-year career in the City of London, where he works for Capital Group, an investment fund which manages more than \$1.4trillion (£1.08trn) of assets.



the Business and Energy Secretary, said yesterday: “We will act on our commitment to intervene when the energy market fails to treat people in a fair and reasonable manner.”

He said the recent spate of price increases “clearly isn’t fair and reasonable and we are going to put it right”.

Lawrence Slade, the chief executive of Energy UK, said the move could “put at risk the billions in investment and jobs needed to renew our energy system”. Centrica, which claims its standard dual-fuel bill of £1,044 per year is cheaper than 95 per cent of the market, has said that it will hold prices until August.

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BREXIT

PM: give me a mandate to take on Macron

By Sam Lister

has made clear he will use the UK’s decision to quit the bloc to boost the French economy and will be “pretty tough” in Brexit negotiations.

In his election manifesto, Mr Macron also described Brexit as a “crime” that would deliver Britain to “servitude”.

Mrs May said: “Yesterday, a new French President was elected. He was elected with a very strong mandate which he can take with him as a strong position in the

negotiations. [In] the UK, we need to ensure we’ve got an equally strong mandate and... strong negotiating position. Every vote for me and my team will strengthen my hand in those Brexit negotiations.”

“The alternative is to risk making Jeremy Corbyn Prime Minister, and just... try and picture him sitting at that negotiating table with the collective might of the European Commission and 27 other European countries against him.”

MEDIA

Party leaders to appear on BBC ‘Question Time’ special

By Adam Sherwin

ARTS AND MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn will jointly take part in a BBC *Question Time* election special – but will not debate with each other.

Mrs May and Mr Corbyn will be questioned separately by members of the audience in a 90-minute special on 2 June, presented by David Dimbleby. The Scottish National Party’s Nicola Sturgeon and Liberal Democrat Tim Farron will appear on a 4 June edition of the programme.

There will also be a live seven-way debate from Cambridge moderated by Mishal Husain on 31 May. The on BBC1 programme will feature “senior” Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, SNP, Plaid Cymru, Green Party and Ukup figures.

The Conservatives could send a figure such as the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, or the Scottish Conservatives’ leader, Ruth

Davidson, in place of Mrs May, who has refused to take part in a head-to-head debate with other leaders.

Mr Corbyn has indicated that he will not take part in a debate without the Prime Minister. Labour could put up the shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, or a rising star such as Rebecca Long-Bailey.

Radio 1’s *Newsbeat* will host a debate with an audience of 16- to 34-year-olds, hosted by Tina Daheley. Andrew Neil will conduct a series of BBC interviews with the leaders in prime time.

ITV will air a leaders’ debate moderated by Julie Etchingham, which will be broadcast live from 8pm on 18 May.

The BBC election specials, staged in the last week before the poll, could come too late to affect the outcome.

Mrs May and her husband, Philip, are due to appear on the BBC’s *One Show* today, with Mr Corbyn to appear later during the campaign.

WELFARE

Tories likely to propose £85,000 cap on social care to save family homes

By Nigel Morris

POLITICAL EDITOR

People would pay a maximum of £85,000 towards the cost of their care in old age under plans being considered for the Tory manifesto.

The planned social-care cap is designed to stop the elderly being

forced to sell their homes in their final years to meet their residential care bills. Beyond this level, the state would step in and cover the costs even if a person has savings left over.

David Cameron’s government had planned to introduce a cap of £72,000 but shelved the plan shortly after the last election.

Theresa May is understood to have been persuaded to revive the policy but with the cap fixed at a less generous level. John Godfrey, No 10’s policy chief and a key figure in writing the Conservative manifesto, is reported to have recommended that it should be introduced at between £80,000 and £85,000.

The scheme would cost the Treasury an estimated £2bn a year. It is not clear how that money would be recouped; one possibility would be for it to be linked to scrapping the so-called “triple lock” on pension increases.

For years, ministers have faced pressure to respond to protests that

people are being forced to sell their family homes to pay for their care.

Six years ago, the Dilnot Commission recommended setting a cap of £72,000 and the Cameron government had legislated to introduce it in 2016.

But the move was delayed until April 2020 over funding concerns.

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